

SOME STAGE FAVORITES OF TODAY.

By Frederic Edward McKay.

THE critics of the modern stage accuse it of a tendency to deteriorate from the lofty standards of taste established, or supposed to have been established, by the old time exponents of the drama. Its apologists reply that the managers are compelled perforce to comply with the demands of the theater goers, and that if there is any ground for the charge of lowered standards the responsibility rests with the taste of the public. The managers add in an "aside," that they only wish they could gauge that taste more accurately, and cater to it with more certainty that their efforts would be appreciated. Lester Wallack once went so far as to say, "It is all very well, this talk that a

manager should follow the public taste, but, confound it, the public hasn't got any!" Fickleness and even apparent inconsistency are certainly elements of the world's attitude toward its favorites. It will suddenly center its regard upon a particular object whose less fortunate and probably envious rivals are left to wonder at their comrade's advancement. Then again it will weary of a former idol and tumble it from its pedestal with a fall that is all the more stunning if that pedestal was a lofty one.

Popularity, however, is very far from being a mere matter of chance. There are certain qualities in plays and players that are sure to command appreciation, and will remain



MAURICE BARRYMORE.
From a photograph by Falk.



HERBERT KELCEY.
From a photograph by Sarony.



ROBERT MANTELL IN "THE CORSICAN BROTHERS."
From a photograph by the Elite Photographic Company, San Francisco.

so while human nature is what it is. The public can never lose its liking for manly men and womanly women, and will never cease to attend plays that give scope to such characters. It will always be interested in the old yet ever new story of love, and will sit gladly before those who can paint the picture of passion in all its glowing tints. It will never be indifferent to the wonderful kaleidoscope of human emotion, or to those that have the skill to lift it to the mental eye of an audience and display its shifting hues of brightness and of gloom. It will never fail to appreci-

ate fun that is neither coarse nor stale, and reward those who have the power to beguile an hour of weariness or depression by their laughter compelling art.

To enforce these abstract reflections with concrete and living examples, glance briefly at some of the figures prominent in the theatrical world, and especially those younger actors and actresses the tide of whose success seems to be still on the flow. Take, for instance, Robert Mantell, not the greatest nor yet by any means the least of contemporary favorites. His reputation has been

won by his earnest and intelligent efforts to invest every character he plays with a romantic and impressive individuality. His physique, fine both in size and in proportion, and his features, well and strongly marked, are adapted to his ambition, and his carefully studied attitudes, gestures and facial expressions are in the main consistent and striking. He belongs to a nationality that has produced few great actors—the Scotch. His stage experience began in England, where he played leading parts in conjunction with Miss Wallis and Miss Marriott. His first notable success in America was won in the part of *Loris Ippanoff*, which he acted in Fanny Davenport's first production of "*Fedora*" in the fall of 1883. This character he invested with a simple dignity, a powerful individuality, and a manly yet tender feeling

that fully satisfied both the lovers of sentiment and the admirers of dramatic strength. It may indeed be true that on the night when he was cast for *Loris Ippanoff* his lucky star shone ablaze, for it was a part in which his very defects, as well as his merits, were of service to him. His continued suggestion of reserve force, his measured manner of speaking—for he dropped his words as if counting them; the intense expression of his eye, the firm set of his mouth—the mannerisms that tend to mar some of his other impersonations, were perfectly appropriate to the young Russian.

Mr. Mantell has since appeared as a star in Comyn Carr's dramatization of "*Called Back*," in Steele Mac-kaye's "*Dackolar*," the opening play of the Lyceum Theater in New York, in "*The Lady of Lyons*," in "*The*



GEORGIE DREW BARRYMORE AS MRS. HILLARY.
From a photograph by Sarony.



ADA REHAN AS KATHARINE.
From a photograph by Sarony.

Corsican Brothers," in "Hamlet," in "Othello," and in several other pieces, mostly of a high dramatic order. His production, last spring, of Albert Roland Haven's "The Veiled Picture," will be remembered by metropolitan theater goers as one in which the actor's skill could not overcome the dullness of the play. His most successful parts since *Loris Ippanoff* have been those of the unhappy *Monbars* in Louis Nathel's adaptation of the drama of that name and the strange dual creation of Dumas's imaginative psychology, the *Corsican Brothers*.

Robert Mantell is an actor of marked merits, decided faults, and considerable possibilities. He is apt, his critics say, to be too elocutionary in trifling sentences, and to tell a

servant to shut the door with as much solemnity as he uses in challenging a rival who has insulted him. Again, he is charged with a lack of animation in scenes that demand rapid utterance and quick movement. These faults no doubt spring from an occasional excess of that conscientious carefulness which has helped him to his present degree of success and may enable him to do still better work in the future.

Maurice Barrymore is another player of whom it has been said that he needs only to free himself from certain hampering individualisms to rise to the highest rank in his profession. He was born in England, the son of a clergyman, and studied at Cambridge before his passion for the stage defeated other plans that

had been formed for him. His age—thirty six—is just that of Mantell, and his stage training has been somewhat similar. He was the *Captain* in Augustin Daly's earliest production of "Pique," and later traveled as Mme. Modjeska's leading support in Shaksperian tragedy and comedy. He originated the part of *Captain Jack*, which he played, and played notably well, to Mrs. Langtry's *Lena Despard* in "As in a Looking Glass." His previous successes were far surpassed by his acting in "Captain Swift." In Haddon Chambers's striking drama, which was produced by Mr. A. M. Palmer, Maurice Barrymore assumed the title role, and found in it a part that fitted him like a glove. His portrayal of the proud and stalwart fellow whose stained past comes up to rob him of his love and drive him to despair and death was powerful and pathetic in the extreme. His athletic physique and



ISABELLE IRVING.
From a photograph by Falk.

his handsome face, to which a defiant look seems naturally to belong, helped to make his impersonation of *Swift* one of convincing realism.

Mr Barrymore has since remained under Mr. Palmer's management, with the exception of a short and disastrous attempt, made a year ago, to appear as an independent star in a poorly constructed play called "Reckless Temple," of which Augustus Thomas was the author.

Both actor and playwright have since retrieved this failure by the former's success as *Captain Davenport* in the original and interesting American play, "Alabama," written by the latter.

Herbert Kelcey is, curiously enough, another Englishman of thirty six. He was brought to this country eight years ago by the late Samuel Colville to act the villain's part in a melodrama called "Taken from Life," at Wallack's Theater. One of his best hits was scored as *The Spider* in "The Silver King,"—a refined ruffian, who plots evil with a calculating shrewdness, and who was impersonated by Mr. Kelcey with an exactness and an absence of staginess that made the part as prominent and engrossing as any in the piece. As *Count Orloff* in "Diplomacy," he undertook the delineation of a different phase of character—the man who sacrifices himself to the happiness of the woman he loves and of his best friend. Mr. Kelcey's dignified and quiet acting of the part attracted an unusual degree of sympathy from the audience. In "Saints and Sinners," produced at the Madison Square Theater, New York, he was the fascinating but contemptible English officer who lures the con-



GEORGIE CAYVAN.
From a photograph by Sarony.

ventional rustic maiden to London. In Gilbert's diverting comedy "Engaged," he played *Cheviot Hill* with a dead earnestness that made the comic situations even more amusing by contrast.

Mr. Kelcey was the first and only leading man of the Lyceum company. His *John Rutherford*, in "The Wife," was a distinctive and well considered performance. He was *Prince Peninkoff* in "The Great Pink Pearl," *John Van Buren* in "The Charity Ball," *Mark Cross* in "The Idler," *Captain Armitage* in "Nerves," and *Little Coke* in "Old Heads and Young Hearts." The fact that throughout this list of characters he satisfied the critics, shows that he is not devoid of versatility. The parts, however, in which he is seen to best advantage on the stage are those of



LILLIAN RUSSELL AND HER DAUGHTER.

From a photograph by Falk.

the well dressed man of the world whose morals may or may not be as faultless as his attire.

Mrs. Georgie Drew Barrymore's reputation rests upon her excellence in comedies of domestic life and society. She was born and bred to the stage, as it were, and was only fifteen when she made her debut under the sheltering wing of her mother, Mrs. John Drew, at the Arch Street Theater, Philadelphia. Her first part was that of *Leonie*, the ingenue in "A Lady's Battle." She

remained at the Arch Street for several seasons, and then accepted an engagement with Augustin Daly, to play the leading juvenile character in "Pique." After three years with Mr. Daly, she acted with her husband, Maurice Barrymore, in "Diplomacy." She made quite a popular hit as *Jemima Bloggs*, a stage struck girl in Frank Harvey's melodrama "The Wages of Sin." But the character that will always be identified with Mrs. Barrymore is the giddy Washington widow, *Mrs.*



MARION MANOLA AND HER DAUGHTER.

From a photograph by Falk.

Hillary, in "The Senator." The spirit of incessant vivacity and comic perplexity with which she played the part rendered it a success only second to that of W. H. Crane as *Senator Rivers*. She is now appearing as the livelier of the two "Mr. Wilkinson's Widows,"—a character which she develops very acceptably.

Among American actresses none, perhaps, has during the last few years attracted so much attention as Miss Ada Rehan, who, as the leading

lady of Augustin Daly's company, has been the most prominent member of an organization that has played before representative audiences and critics of America, England, France, and Germany. Miss Rehan was born in Limerick thirty one years ago, but came to this country with her parents while in her early childhood. Her real name is Crehan, but she relates that on the first play bill in which her name figured the printer accidentally separated the initial letter from the rest—an error which

she allowed to be perpetuated. This first appearance of hers was in 1874, as *Clara* in "Across the Continent." She afterward received a valuable stage training in Mrs. John Drew's company at the Arch Street Theater, in Philadelphia, then in its prime. She also had the advantage of association with those truly great artists Edwin Booth and John McCullough in Shaksperian productions. In 1879 her acting first won the admiration of Mr. Daly, with the result that she shortly afterward entered under his management, and was rapidly promoted from subordinate to leading parts. Her earliest appearance upon the boards of Daly's Theater, the scene of her later triumphs, was as *Nellie Beers* in "Love's Young Dream." Her subsequent repertory is too long for enumeration, including a wide range of legitimate plays.

Mr. Daly's summer tours to London, Paris, and Berlin may be said to have become a fixed feature of his theatrical management. Indeed, he is credited with the intention of extending his European ventures by the acquisition of a permanent foothold in the British capital.

Should he carry out this design, we may expect to have to share with English audiences the pleasure of witnessing Miss Rehan's acting. Transatlantic theater goers, slow at first to recognize her title to the highest histrionic rank, have finally and fully admitted it. William Archer, the most exacting of London critics, has hailed her as one of the most gifted actresses that ever came to his notice.

Miss Rehan presents the spectacle of an actress who, gifted by nature with beauty of face and figure, and a voice of melodious quality, has, by diligent and well directed study of a wide variety of parts, qualified herself to render all of them. She is especially delightful in comedy that calls for banter and badinage. This she proved, to take one instance out of many, in her part in "The Railroad of Love,"—that of *Valentine Ospray*, a sort of *Lady Gay Spanker* without *Lady Gay's* audacity. But those who laugh most merrily can also be the saddest, and it is true of Ada Rehan that she has struck responsively every note in the gamut of emotion. For example, her serious work in Pinero's pathetic play, "The Squire," was of



KING ANSO'S ATTENDANTS IN "THE MERRY MONARCH."

From a photograph by Sarony.

a rare and tender kind, and seldom have audiences been more profoundly affected than those that witnessed it.

Nearly two centuries ago Colley Cibber said of the famous Nance Oldfield that she was tall in stature and beautiful in action and aspect, and that she was like one of those figures in fine paintings that first seize and longest delight the eye of the spectator. Were Cibber alive today he might adapt this description to Miss Rehan without altering a detail. There is about every phase of her wonderfully versatile art a certain indefinable charm that is all the more pleasing because it defies exact analysis.

Compared to Ada Rehan, Isabelle Irving is like the daisy beside the blush rose. She is the juvenile actress of Mr. Daly's company. Her stage experience has been brief, but she has already become a favorite. She has a pretty, piquante face, framed in a profusion of nut brown curls, and—far more important—a delicate sensibility and a fund of buoyant vivacity that give promise of success in the profession to which she is enthusiastically devoted.

Miss Georgie Cayvan is another actress who stands close behind the leaders. She was born in Bath, Maine, thirty three years ago, and may be described as a pupil of Bostonian dramatic and elocutionary art. After graduation from the Boston School of Oratory, she gave readings through New England, and then entered the Boston Ideal company to sing the part of *Cousin Hebe* in "Pinafore." Steele Mackaye, detecting possibilities in her, cast her as *Dolly Dutton* in "Hazel Kirke." Subsequently she acted the title role in that play, and was *Queen Focasta* in George Riddle's careful production of the "Ædipus Rex" of Sophocles. Her *Daisy Brown* in William Gillette's "Professor," was a lively and attractive rendering of a comedy part.

The first character in which she received merited recognition in the metropolis was that of *Helen Truman*,

the heroine of "The Wife," presented by the stock company of the Lyceum. Her rendering of the part was remarkable for the skill with which she portrayed a succession of varying emotions—a point in which she is indeed exceptionally strong. As leading lady of the Lyceum company she was cast for *Ann Cruger* in "The Charity Ball," a play that was in reality little more than a revamping of the materials of "The Wife." She took part in the series of pieces in which Mr. Kelcey enacted the principal masculine characters—"Nerves," "The Idler," and "Old Heads and Young Hearts," besides several produced at special authors' matinees. She is at her best in parts that are emotional without being ultra sentimental. She has a sweetness that is never suggestive of treacle. There are few if any actresses better suited than she for the delineation of a true womanly woman.

A list of stage favorites that did not contain the name of Lillian Russell would be incomplete indeed. Of the various forms of the drama, comic opera is king. Miss Russell is the unquestioned queen of comic opera. The inference is that her position is, at least in a material sense, a uniquely advantageous one. Her share of the box office results of her performances is larger than that of any other American actress who has not a company of her own. Mr. French, under whose management she is shortly to appear in Audran's opera "La Cigale," announces that the magnitude of his star's salary will oblige him to raise the prices of seats above the customary tariff—a sacrifice of dollars to art to which the public will probably uncomplainingly submit in its anxiety to listen to the burlesque singer whose weekly remuneration is larger than that of the President of the United States.

To the celebrated Tony Pastor is attributed the credit of discovering Miss Russell. She was born in Clinton, Iowa, in 1860, and was Helen Louise Leonard before she assumed a stage name. As a child

she had a remarkable gift for music. Her parents taught her to play the violin, and at one time were about to send her out on a concert tour as an "infant phenomenon." This fate she escaped, to appear on the operatic stage in "Evangeline," which has been a medium of fame for many singers. She was in "The Sorcerer," with which the Bijou Opera House in New York was opened, and then went to the Casino, where most of her later renown has been won, to play the *Prince* in "Prince Methusalem." The parts that she has since filled have been too numerous for recounting. Best of all, perhaps, were her recent successes in the title role of "The Grand Duchess" and in "The Brigands." She has little of the chic and vivacity of Judic or Theo; her acting is indeed generally criticised as being somewhat tame. But she has, besides a face and form of statuesque perfection, a voice whose brilliance, clearness, strength and flexibility are nothing short of magnificent.

Lillian Russell's splendid natural endowments have commanded the homage of theater goers; Marion Manola has won it by clever and careful acting and a fixed determination to please her audiences. Her voice is of no great volume, but it is well trained and of fine quality. She has been prominently identified with the comic opera stage for about seven years, and has done much excellent work in the companies of Colonel McCaull, Rudolph Aronson, and other managers. She has been *Cerise* in "Erminie," *Minna* in "The

Black Hussar," *Countess Bianca* in "Jacquette," *Ulla* in "The Bellman," and has sung the title parts in "Falka" and "Boccaccio." During the last two summers she was prima donna in the successful presentations of "Clover" and "The Tar and the Tartar," at Palmer's Theater in New York, and is now traveling with the McCaull troupe.

Miss Manola is in private life Mrs. Mason, and has a daughter whose portrait appears in these pages, and who might perhaps become an Elsie Leslie or a Dot Clarendon were it not for her mother's expressed determination that she shall never go upon the boards.

There are great stage favorites and diminutive stage favorites. On the morning after the opening night of "The Merry Monarch," there were two little darkies who read in the critical columns of the daily press a favorable comment upon their performance as the attendants of *King Anso*. Their surprise was equaled by their delight. It may be added that their success has continued, and their parts have not been cut—for they say never a word in the opera. The basis of their popularity must be sought for in their amusing personal appearance, which is herewith reproduced as caught by the camera. Their names—Johnnie Goleman and Jesse Henderson—may possibly become famous in the theatrical annals of the future. Who knows that one of them may not some day rise from a part that is but pantomime to become an impressive and realistic Othello?

THE END.

THE play is done—the curtain falls—
 Hero and villain trade their parts;
 The rich scenes change to smoky walls;
 The lovers e'en forget their hearts.

And so it is with life—a play
 Made Tragedy or Farce at will;
 Who knows but as the mourners pray
 The dead finds changes greater still?

Winthrop Church.